A

BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF THE

Late PERSECUTION

AND

Barbarous Uſage

OF THE

METHODISTS

At *EXETER.*

WHEREIN

The Characters of the RIOTERS, their Aiders, and Abettors, are fully deſcribed, their Reaſons and Pretenſions fairly examined and fully refuted.

By an IMPARTIAL HAND.

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A BRIEF

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OUR firſt Reformer MARTIN LUTHER was born at *Iſlebe*, a little Town in the County of *Mansfield*, in *Higher Saxony*, in the Year 1483. And notwithſtanding he was of poor Parentage, they found Means to educate him a Scholar, and very early ſent him to the Univerſity of *Magdeburg*; where he ſoon rendered himſelf very conſpicuous by his extraordinary Abilities. At the Age of Twenty he commenced Maſter of Arts; and, ſoon after, at the Univerſity of *Wittemberg*, took his Degree as Doctor of Divinity: And for many Years preached with great Applauſe and Reputation.

In the Year 1517, ſome of the Clergy, envying the growing Reputation of *Luther*, began to charge him with Hereſy, and to declare openly that his Doctrines and Sermons were not favourable to the Church. *Luther*, finding himſelf thus attacked, and being ſenſible he had advanced ſome Things contrary to the common received Opinions, like an honeſt Man, diffident of

himſelf and Cauſe, was determined to lay aſide for a Time all controverted Points, and to engage in a more free and impartial Study of the Scriptures, and then to recant or vindicate, as the Truth ſhould appear. And, after having examined the Sacred Records with great Labour and Aſſiduity, he preſently became more and more convinced, that the then Eſtabliſhment was a wicked and unrighteous one, inconſiſtent with, and ſubverſive of, all the Principles of true and genuine Chriſtianity.

In Conſequence of this Conviction, he openly declared, both in his Sermons and Writings, againſt all the ungodly Claims of Spiritual Men, and all coercive Power in the Church; and deny'd ſhe hath any Right to add new Articles to the Chriſtian Faith, or to impoſe her own Explications, or Conſequences, on the Conſciences of others. He openly exhorted all his Followers to adhere to the holy Word of GOD: Affirming, that he thought himſelf bound, in Duty to GOD, and Love to the Souls of his Hearers, publickly to declare, That the Sacred Writings of the Old and New Teſtament contain'd a full and compleat Revelation of the Mind and Will of GOD, and that they ought to be eſteem'd as the only infallible Rule of the Faith and Practice of every Chriſtian; and that, by this Rule, or Standard, all Opinions ought to be fairly and impartially examined: And alſo, That the Decrees of Popes or Councils, Synods, Convocations, or Aſſemblies, or any Body of Men whatever, were not of equal Authority with the Word of GOD: And that the main Deſign of obliging People to receive, and to ſubmit to, theſe arbitrary Decrees, was only to keep them in a ſlaviſh Dependance on the then Eſtabliſh'd Clergy, the better to anſwer the Purpoſe of their unbounded Avarice, Ambition, and Luxury. He likewiſe openly proteſted againſt the Infallibility of the Pope, and in a Variety of Particulars againſt the Superſtition, Fraud, Violence, and tyrannical impoſing Spirit of the Church of *ROME*. He alſo aſſerted the Right of private Judgment, and that every Man muſt judge of the Senſe and Meaning of Scripture for himſelf

himſelf, and ought to remain undiſturb'd in the quiet and peaceable Enjoyment of his Principles.

Theſe Doctrines and Principles were the Baſis and Foundation of the Reformation; and were by *Luther* openly aſſerted, and propogated with that Boldneſs and Courage that is inſeparable from the Cauſe of Truth and Juſtice. And, notwithſtanding all the furious Attacks of the neighbouring Clergy, the Number of his Followers daily encreaſed. No Wonder the Clergy were ſo alarm'd. They preſently ſaw, that ſhould *Luther*'s Scheme take Place, Chriſtianity muſt be reduced to the *alone* Standard of REASON and SCRIPTURE, —— the Two greateſt Enemies in the World to the *Sacerdotal Empire*.

This Affair of *Luther* was at firſt confined to very narrow Limits; only within the Acquaintance of a few Private Men. And had the Clergy never oppreſſed him with that true *Eccleſiaſtical Spirit* of Rage, Fury, and Violence, probably we in this Part of the World had never heard of his Name, nor of that glorious Reformation, of which (under GOD) he was the chief Inſtrument; but at this Moment had been, both Body and Soul, tied down in Chains and Fetters of Darkneſs and Slavery.

In the Year 1521, at the Diet of *Worms*, the Clergy, with great Art and Cunning, got an Edict paſſed and publiſhed, by which this poor *Martin Luther* was declared to be an Heretick and Schiſmatick. And the moſt cruel Puniſhments were ordained againſt all thoſe that ſhould receive and protect him, or that ſhould be Readers of his Books, or Followers of his Doctrines.

The grand Charge exhibited againſt him at the Diet was, That he was an Enemy to the CHURCH: That he preach'd Hereſy and Nonſenſe, and deſtroy'd the Peace of the CHURCH. The Publication of this Edict, which was intended to ſuppreſs *Lutheraniſm*, or the *new Religion*, as it was then called, gave it a prodigious and ſurpriſing Spread, that within the Compaſs of Two Years it prevailed not only in all the Great Towns in *Germany*, but was got even into *Italy*, *Switzerland*, and many other Parts of *Europe*, in ſpite of all the Oppoſition from the Devil, the Pope, the Clergy, and all

their Adherents;—who had the dreadful Mortification to ſee, what they intended ſhould overthrow and aboliſh the *new Religion*, had turned out to its ſurpriſing Increaſe and Advancement. But what gave the Clergy a particular Diſguſt was, that the *Followers of this new Religion* were remarkable in their Adherence and Attachment to the New Teſtament; the Knowledge and Practice of which, they well knew, would deſtroy their exorbitant Power and Wealth. And therefore they determined to make another bold and wicked Attack on the *Followers of the new Religion* (for ſo they were then generally called).

In the Year 1529, at the Grand Diet of the Princes of the Empire, at *Spires*, in *Germany*, the following Edict, or Decree, was agreed to by the *Orthodox* then preſent; — that is, by the *Majority*; *viz.* 'That it 'ſhould be lawful for no one to change his Religion; 'nor ſhould any *Catholick* be allowed to embrace *Lu-'theraniſm*. That the *Sacramentarians* ſhould be ba-'niſh'd the Empire. That the *Anabaptiſt* ſhould be 'puniſh'd with Death. And that no Preacher what-'ſoever ſhould explain the Scriptures in any other 'Senſe than what was approved of by the Church.'

The CLERGY concluded, that the dreadful Perſecution and Bloodſhed that muſt unavoidably enſue from this wicked and cruel Decree, could not fail to extirpate and root up *Lutheraniſm* at once. But they again found themſelves vaſtly miſtaken. And, to their unſpeakable Surprize and Chagrine, in the very Diet many warm Debates were made againſt the Decree; and it met with a long and vehement Oppoſition. However, at laſt, that ignorant and knaviſh Cry of the CHURCH'S BEING IN DANGER prevail'd, and the Decree was paſs'd by an unqueſtionable Majority. Againſt this diabolical Decree ſeveral Princes of the Empire were greatly enraged, and enter'd their publick *Proteſt*, viz. *John* Elector of *Saxony*, *George* Marquis of *Brandenburgh*, *Philip* Landgrave of *Heſſe*, and *Wolffgans* Pr. of *Anhault*. To whom the following Fourteen Free Cities of *Germany* joined themſelves; *viz. Straſburg*, *Norimberg*, *Ulm*, *Conſtance*, *Lindau*, *Memeningen*; *Kempen*, *Nordlingen*, *Heliburn*, *Rentlingen*, *Iſne*, *St. Gall*,

Gall, Weiſſenburg, and Windſheim. And from this PROTEST the *Lutherans* firſt obtain'd the Name of PROTESTANTS; which was afterwards given in Common to all who ſeparated themſelves from the tyrannical and idolatrous CHURCH of *ROME*.

And here I can't omit taking Notice, that HIS preſent MAJESTY is deſcended from one of thoſe Noble Houſes who join'd in this *Proteſt*, againſt the Cruelties and Superſtitions of the Church of *ROME*.

Happy we! whoſe Prince is deſcended from a Race of Nobles who early embraced, and reſolutely defended, the PROTESTANT RELIGION, and who moſt eminently adorn'd their Rank and Dignity, by boldly oppoſing the wicked and impious Claims of *Eccleſiaſtical Men*; who, for many Ages, under the Notion of the *Church*, had moſt grievouſly oppreſſed the Liberty of the Chriſtian World. May their Succeſſors ever follow their glorious Example, and then they will be *Defenders of* that *Faith* which is the Reſult of Conviction and Evidence, and only fit for *Reaſonable Beings*.

My Deſign in giving you this ſhort Account of the Riſe, and ſurpriſing Progreſs, of the REFORMATION in *Germany*, is chiefly to demonſtrate, that the more any Religion or any particular Denomination of Chriſtians are *perſecuted*, the more they will ſpread and increaſe, and the ſtronger will it be rivetted in the Minds of its Votaries.

What at preſent has led me to theſe Speculations was the late dreadful Riot, and barbarous Uſage of the *Methodiſts*, in this City. The Rioters did not ſeek the Shelter of the Night to compleat their horrid Villainy; but did it in broad Day-light, in Sight of the Sun; in a tumultuous Manner beſet the Methodiſt Meeting-houſe, when they were performing their Devotion; and, having ſome Nights before violently enter'd the Houſe, and interrupted the Miniſter with opprobrious and obſcene Language, they now fell on him in a moſt furious Manner with Blows and Kicks; and treated every Man they could lay Hands on with ſuch Abuſe and Indignity as is not to be expreſs'd. But what is more than all was their abominable Rudeneſs to the poor Women, ſtripping ſome quite naked; others,

not-

notwithſtanding their moſt piercing Cries for Mercy and Deliverance from the Hands of thoſe wicked Ruffians, were forcibly held by ſome, while others turn'd their Petticoats all over their Heads, and forced them to remain, in that Condition, as a Spectacle to their infamous Banter and Ridicule; and were afterwards dragged thro' the Kennel, which they had on purpoſe fill'd with Mud and Dirt. Several of the Women, while in the Hands of their Tormentors, fell into Fits and Convulſions, and were incapable of making the leaſt Reſiſtance: Notwithſtanding which, they were treated, by this mercileſs Mob, with the utmoſt Violence, Rudeneſs, and Indecency; were dragg'd thro' the Kennel, and left, as they thought, quite dead on the Ground. Others of the Women had their Cloaths, yea their very Shifts, torn from their Backs. With ſuch other Scenes of Immodeſty and Abuſe as is a Shame to expreſs. Many of the Women cry'd out to their Tormentors, and in the utmoſt Agonies and Bitterneſs of Soul, begg'd to be murder'd inſtantly, rather than ſubmit to their rude and immodeſt Treatment. Towards the Cloſe of the Evening one of the Mob forced a Woman up into the Gallery, and actually attempted to raviſh her at three different Times. The poor Woman at laſt was quite tired, and intreated the wicked Wretch to murder her inſtantly. However, after many Struggles ſhe freed herſelf, leap'd over the Gallery, and ſo made her Eſcape. Many, to avoid falling into the Hands of this wicked Crew, leap'd out of the Windows, got over Garden Walls, to the endangering their Lives. They demoliſh'd the Fore Seat of the Gallery, and with horrid Oaths and Imprecations ſwore they would pull down the Houſe.

It ought further to be look'd upon as very extraordinary, that this Outrage was committed in the Centre of the City, and in Preſence of many Thouſand People. Yea, take it altogether, in all its Circumſtances, it can hardly be parallel'd in any Age or Hiſtory. This Riot continued for ſeveral Hours. The rude Mob had their full Swing. No Magiſtrate, or Juſtice of the Peace, came to their Relief or Aſſiſtance, notwithſtanding they were apply'd to, and greatly impor-

tun'd

tun'd to read the Riot Act. No; the Magiſtrates, on this Occaſion, ſeem'd to be void of all Tenderneſs, and Regard for the Rights and Liberties of the People, and did not teſtify any Concern for the Protection and Security of their Fellow Citizens. As *Guardians of the City* they ought to have conſider'd, that the conniving at, or (which is all one) the not taking proper Methods to reſtrain, the Violence of the Mob, manifeſtly tends to the Diſſolution of all Government, and the Subverſion of the publick Peace.

It's true, no one was actually murder'd: But the whole Society was put in great Danger and Fear of their Lives, and expected nothing but Death. Many of the Women are now in very critical Circumſtances under care of proper Surgeons and Apothecaries; and their Lives are even * yet in Danger. Theſe Rioters had no Regard to Virgins, or Women great with Child. The moſt piercing Cries, and the moſt hazardous Circumſtances, would not avail, or reſcue them from their moſt violent and immodeſt Treatment.

The great End and Deſign of MAGISTRACY is the Protecting the Innocent and Puniſhing Evil-doers. I have really as great a Regard and Reverence for the Perſons and Authority of our Magiſtrates as any one Citizen whatſoever. Yet I muſt beg Leave to ſay on this Head, they were extremely defective in their Duty.

The Treatment of the *Methodiſts* here was pretty much akin to that of St. *Paul* in the xixth Chapter of the *Acts:* But the Conduct of our Magiſtrates vaſtly different from thoſe of the *Epheſians*. Here one *Demetrius*, in Conjunction with the Clergy of the Great Goddeſs DIANA, ſpirited up the Mob: (Ver. 28.) *And when they heard theſe Sayings*, (that is, the proper Inſtructions from their Leaders, *Demetrius* and the Clergy) *they were full of Wrath, and cryed out, ſaying, Great is* Diana *of the* Epheſians. They continued in this riotous manner for the Space of two Hours, all in Confuſion, crying out, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians!* Anglicè *Sound for the Church! Sound for the Church!*

or

* Written Two Days after the Riot.

or in the *Turkiſh* Language, *The Standard of Mahomet! The Standard of Mahomet!* The *Epheſian* Mob being now properly prepar'd, they laid violent Hands on two of *Paul*'s Companions, *Gaius* and *Ariſtarchus*, and drag'd 'em into the Theatre with Rudeneſs and Violence; altho' not with the twentieth Part of that Rage and Cruelty as the *Exeter* Rioters did the *Methodiſts*.

The Magiſtrates of *Epheſus* thought it high Time to interpoſe, and ſent their Town-Clerk, who with Reaſon and Argument appeas'd the People; and, after having made them aſham'd of that Fury and Wrath *Demetrius* and the *Clergy* had inſpired them with, He, like an honeſt ſenſible Lawyer, reaſons with them calmly and deliberately: *What Man is there that knoweth not how that the City of the* Epheſians *is a Worſhipper of the Great Goddeſs* Diana, *and of the Image that fell down from* Jupiter? Ver. 36. *Seeing that theſe Things can't be ſpoken againſt, ye ought to be quiet, and do nothing raſhly*, V. 37. *For theſe Men* (meaning *Paul*, *Gaius*, and *Ariſtarchus*) *are neither Robbers of Churches, nor Blaſphemers of your Godde's.* Ver. 38, 39. *And if* Demetrius *or the Craftmen* (that is, the CLERGY) *have any Matter againſt any Man, the Law is open, there are Deputies, let them implead one another,* —— *and it ſhall be determined in a lawful Aſſembly.* Ver. 40, 41. he concludes with great Judgment and ſound Reaſoning: *For we are in Danger to be called in Queſtion for this Day's Uproar, there being no Cauſe whereby we can give an Account of this Concourſe. And having thus ſpoken, he diſmiſſed the Aſſembly.*

Every-body knows the Town-Clerk of *Exeter* is not a Jot inferiour in the Method of Addreſs, or in the Arts of Perſuaſion, to the Town-Clerk of *Epheſus*; and would undoubtedly have diſcharg'd his Duty with the ſame Succeſs, and equal Reputation to himſelf, as the Town-Clerk of *Epheſus* did, had he receiv'd proper Inſtructions from the Magiſtrates.

I will readily grant that our Rioters were abundantly more ignorant, violent, and wicked, than thoſe at *Epheſus*. But the Town-Clerk there had probably no *Riot Act* to make Uſe of, in Caſe his Arguments and Reaſon-

Reaſoning had fail'd, which ours might have had. Certainly the ſuffering the Rioters to continue for ſeveral Hours in Broad-day-light, in the very Centre of the City, every Minute committing ſuch monſtrous Violence and Indecency, both on Men and Women, diſcovers ſuch a Defect in their Duty, as Guardians of the Publick Peace and Safety, that very probably (as the Town-Clerk of *Epheſus* obſerv'd) they may be in Danger of being called in Queſtion for that Day's Uproar.

I have lately examined into the Conduct of the Juſtices of the Peace in *Lancaſhire*, *Staffordſhire*, and in the City of *London*, and in many other Parts where Riots have happened ſince the Commencement of the Riot Act, and do find, that, on proper Notice, wherever the Rioters exceeded the Number of Twelve, and had committed any Violence, the Juſtices always thought themſelves obliged inſtantly to repair to the Place where the Riot was, and there read the Proclamation, as the Act directs. Were it at the Option of the Juſtices to read the Proclamation or not, it would then be in the Power of every petty Mayor, or Juſtice of the Peace, to defeat the very Deſign and Intention of the Act of Parliament, when, and as often as, they pleas'd; Which can by no Means be preſum'd.

The *Exeter* Juſtices could not want proper Notice or Information of this Riot. Whether they acted right, in refuſing to read the Proclamation, or not, muſt be left to the learned Lawyers to determine. To me, who am no Lawyer, they appear to have greatly neglected their Duty. And what confirms me in this Opinion is, the following Clauſe in the Riot Act, *Anno primo* GEORGII:

'And be it enacted, by the Authority aforeſaid, that 'the Juſtice of the Peace, or other Perſon authorized 'by this Act to make the ſaid Proclamation, ſhall, 'among the ſaid Rioters, or as near as he can ſafely 'come, with a loud Voice command, or cauſe to be 'commanded, Silence to be while Proclamation is 'making; and, after that, ſhall openly, and with a 'loud

'loud Voice, make, or cauſe to be made, Proclama-
'tion, in theſe Words, or like in Effect: ——
'*Our Sovereign Lord the King chargeth and command-*
'*eth all Perſons, being aſſembled, immediately to diſperſe*
'*themſelves, and peaceably to depart to their Habitations,*
'*or to their lawful Buſineſs, upon the Pains contained in*
'*the Act, made in the Firſt Year of King* GEORGE, *for*
'*preventing Tumults and riotous Aſſemblies.*
'GOD *ſave the* KING.

Mind the next Clauſe. — 'And every ſuch Juſtice
'and Juſtices of the Peace, Sheriff, Under-Sheriff,
'Mayor, Bailiff, or other Head Officer aforeſaid,
'within the Limits of their reſpective Juriſdictions,
'are hereby authoriſed, impowered, and *required*, on
'Notice, or *Knowledge*, of any ſuch unlawful, riotous,
'and tumultuous Aſſembly, to reſort to the Place
'where ſuch unlawful, riotous, and tumultuous Aſſem-
'bly ſhall be, of Perſons to the Number of Twelve,
'or more, and there to make, or cauſe to be made,
'Proclamation in manner aforeſaid.'

By this Act it indiſputably appears, that every Mayor, or Juſtice of the Peace, on Notice, or *Knowledge* of any Riot within the Limits of their reſpective Juriſdiction, ſtands obliged to read the Proclamation; and to ſuppreſs the Riot, apprehend the Rioters, and to uſe all poſſible Means to preſerve the Publick Peace and Tranquility.

The Legiſlature has, on many Occaſions, teſtify'd their great Abhorrence and Deteſtation of all Mobs and Riots; and particularly in the late Riot at *Edinburgh*, in the Caſe of Capt. *Porteous*, an innocent Man: For ſo we muſt preſume him to be at the Time he was murder'd. The Rioters here had ſome Senſe of Fear and Shame: They did not force open the Priſon, or attempt the execrable Fact of putting him to Death, 'till after it was dark. It's true, here was the wilful deliberate Murder of a ſingle Man. But let us examine the Riot of *Exon*, and it will appear (taking all Circumſtances together) vaſtly more heinous and wicked. The Rioters at *Exon*, void of all Senſe and Shame, committed their Villainy in Broad-day-light, in the Centre of the

City, and in Preſence of many Thouſand People. At *Edinburgh* a ſingle Man was murder'd. At *Exon* Two Hundred Men and Women were put in great Fear and Danger of their Lives. It's preſum'd many of the Women will never perfectly recover from the great Hurry and Agony of Spirits, and the real Injuries they receiv'd, when in the Hands of their barbarous and cruel Tormentors.

The Riot at *Edinburgh* engaged the Attention of the Houſe of Lords for many Weeks. *Alexander Wilſon*, Eſq; the then Lord Provoſt, and other of the Magiſtrates, were ordered to attend the Houſe of Lords; where they heard the Riot painted out in Colours adminiſtering the utmoſt Horror and Deteſtation. Yea, ſo great an Abhorrence had that Venerable and Auguſt Aſſembly to all Mobbing, and to the Support and Preſervation of the Laws, that a Bill was brought in to demoliſh the City Gates, to lay it waſte and open, whereby it would be reduced to the Condition of a Country Village. Yea, another Bill was brought in to diſable *Alexander Wilſon*, Eſq; from ever more holding any Place of Profit, Truſt, or Power, under the Government. And, if I am not greatly miſtaken, the ſaid Lord Provoſt was obliged on his Knees, at the Bar of the Houſe of Lords, to acknowledge his Fault, and the Lenity of Their Lordſhips towards him.

But let us ſee what the Lord Provoſt had done to incur the Cenſure of the Houſe. No one pretended he was privy to, or in any Shape had encouraged, the Rioters. No; the Puniſhment and Cenſure inflicted on him, and the other Magiſtrates, was for not exerting their utmoſt Power and Influence to ſuppreſs the Riot, and apprehend the Rioters.

Before I diſmiſs this *Exeter* Riot, I muſt remark that the Methodiſts, not only on the Day of the Grand Riot, but many Times ſince, have been treated by this lawleſs Rabble with the utmoſt Fury and Violence. They have been mobb'd and inſulted, at Noon-day, in the open Streets, and furiouſly pelted with Dirt, Stones, Sticks, Cabbage-Stamps, *&c. &c.* In ſhort, the whole Conduct of this wicked Crew towards the

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The Legiſlature has, on many Occaſions, teſtify'd their great Abhorrence and Deteſtation of all Mobs and Riots; and particularly in the late Riot at *Edinburgh*, in the Caſe of Capt. *Porteous*, an innocent Man: For ſo we muſt preſume him to be at the Time he was murder'd. The Rioters here had ſome Senſe of Fear and Shame: They did not force open the Priſon, or attempt the execrable Fact of putting him to Death, 'till after it was dark. It's true, here was the wilful deliberate Murder of a ſingle Man. But let us examine the Riot of *Exon*, and it will appear (taking all Circumſtances together) vaſtly more heinous and wicked. The Rioters at *Exon*, void of all Senſe and Shame, committed their Villainy in Broad-day-light, in the Centre of the

City, and in Preſence of many Thouſand People. At *Edinburgh* a ſingle Man was murder'd. At *Exon* Two Hundred Men and Women were put in great Fear and Danger of their Lives. It's preſum'd many of the Women will never perfectly recover from the great Hurry and Agony of Spirits, and the real Injuries they receiv'd, when in the Hands of their barbarous and cruel Tormentors.

The Riot at *Edinburgh* engaged the Attention of the Houſe of Lords for many Weeks. *Alexander Wilſon*, Eſq; the then Lord Provoſt, and other of the Magiſtrates, were ordered to attend the Houſe of Lords; where they heard the Riot painted out in Colours adminiſtering the utmoſt Horror and Deteſtation. Yea, ſo great an Abhorrence had that Venerable and Auguſt Aſſembly to all Mobbing, and to the Support and Preſervation of the Laws, that a Bill was brought in to demoliſh the City Gates, to lay it waſte and open, whereby it would be reduced to the Condition of a Country Village. Yea, another Bill was brought in to diſable *Alexander Wilſon*, Eſq; from ever more holding any Place of Profit, Truſt, or Power, under the Government. And, if I am not greatly miſtaken, the ſaid Lord Provoſt was obliged on his Knees, at the Bar of the Houſe of Lords, to acknowledge his Fault, and the Lenity of Their Lordſhips towards him.

But let us ſee what the Lord Provoſt had done to incur the Cenſure of the Houſe. No one pretended he was privy to, or in any Shape had encouraged, the Rioters. No; the Puniſhment and Cenſure inflicted on him, and the other Magiſtrates, was for not exerting their utmoſt Power and Influence to ſuppreſs the Riot, and apprehend the Rioters.

Before I diſmiſs this *Exeter* Riot, I muſt remark that the Methodiſts, not only on the Day of the Grand Riot, but many Times ſince, have been treated by this lawleſs Rabble with the utmoſt Fury and Violence. They have been mobb'd and inſulted, at Noon-day, in the open Streets, and furiouſly pelted with Dirt, Stones, Sticks, Cabbage-Stumps, *&c. &c.* In ſhort, the whole Conduct of this wicked Crew towards the

Methodiſts has been more like wild Savages than like Proteſtants or Chriſtians. Yea, the City Conſtables apprehended one of their Miniſters, and a Gentleman of *Plymouth*, without any Shadow of Reaſon or Law; and, at the Head of a rude Mob, dragg'd them to the City Priſon, where they kept them many Hours. I am ſenſible 'tis the Opinion of many, that ſome Publick Notice will be taken of this Riot. How far it may be true, I can't pretend to ſay. But I am perſuaded, that had this Violence and Outrage been committed in the wild and inhoſpitable Region of *Africa*, or *America*, the Rioters had certainly been puniſh'd with Death, and with all the particular Severities the Laws of thoſe Countries will allow; and for which I could produce many Inſtances from *Salmon*'s Hiſtory of *Africa*, and from *Dampier*'s Hiſtory of the Laws and Cuſtoms of the *Indians* in *America*.

For to what Purpoſe do Mankind form themſelves into Society, were it not for the better Preſervation and Security of their Perſons and Properties, and that thereby the Violent and Wicked may be reſtrained from invading the Rights and Liberties of others? With regard to the Perſecution of the Methodiſts here, it has greatly increas'd their Numbers. Their Miniſters and People ſeem poſſeſs'd with an Opinion that our bleſſed Saviour foreſaw the grievous Perſecutions that would befal them for his Sake; and for their particular Encouragement and Support has pronounced them bleſſed: ——*Bleſſed are they that are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake; For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* And again: *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your Reward in Heaven: For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets, that were before you.* From theſe and ſuch like Texts of Scripture they draw their Relief and Comfort.

I have done with the Riot; and come now to deſcribe the Characters of the Rioters, their Aiders and Abettors; and alſo particularly to examine their Reaſons and Pretences. And, after the ſtricteſt Enquiry, I can't find that any one *Diſſenter*, of *any Denomination*, was at all concerned in this Riot.——They were all of the *old Stamp*, that have ever been known or diſtinguiſh'd by the Name of *Church Rabble*, or, in ſome Places,

Places, by the Name of the *God Damme Men*, or the *God Damme Crew*.

The Buſineſs of RELIGION is to reſtrain the Violence, the wild and unruly Paſſions of the Human Mind; to deſtroy the Seeds of Strife, Anger, and Revenge; and to make all Men live friendly and amicably. But CHRISTIANITY goes much further, and in an eſpecial manner teaches Men *Peace*, *Charity*, *mutual Forbearance*, and *Forgiveneſs of Injuries*. The New and great Commandment our Saviour gave to his Apoſtles, and to all Chriſtians, was *That ye love one another*: ——*For except ye love one another, ye can't be my Diſciples*—— Our Saviour's poſitive Declaration. St. *Paul*, in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, Chap. xii. Ver. 8, 9, ſays, *Owe no Man any thing but Love: For he that loveth another hath fulfill'd the Law*, And if there is any other Commandment tis briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf*. So that the Love of GOD and our Neighbour ſeems to comprehend the whole Duty of a Chriſtian. 1 *John* iv. 7, 8. *Beloved, let us love one another; for Love is of* GOD; *and every one that loveth is born of* GOD. Ver. 16. GOD *is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in* GOD, *and* GOD *in him*. Yea this noble, generous, and benevolent Diſpoſition of Mind, is declar'd in Scripture to be of ſo much Importance, and that in all Ages, ſince the firſt Promulgation of Chriſtianity, it has been eſteem'd the only GRAND CHARACTERISTICK of a TRUE CHRISTIAN. *By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, that ye love one another.* Could St. *Paul* or St. *John* have been preſent at the late Riot at *Exon*, they would have been aſtoniſh'd and ſurpriz'd, beyond all Expreſſion or Conception, to ſee ſuch Violence, Rudeneſs, and monſtrous Indecency.——They would have told the Rioters, 'Your Impudence is matchleſs and 'inimitable, in pretending to be *Proteſtants*, or *Chriſtians*. Every Chriſtian Church upon Earth muſt diſ-'own you. Chriſtianity itſelf renounces you. Every 'honeſt and ſenſible Man deſpiſes and condemns you. '*Ye are of your Father the Devil; and the Luſt of your* 'Father will ye do. John viii. 44.'

This *Church* Rabble hath ever been eſteemed the moſt abandoned and wicked, the moſt impious, profligate, and prophane, that this or any other Nation hath ever produced. Of which I beg Leave to offer a few Inſtances, and to ſhew that this Crew are not only avowed Enemies to our *publick Peace* and *Quiet*, but alſo to our *Laws*, *Conſtitution*, and *Government*.

In the Year 1715, this *Church* Rabble took it in their Heads to pull down a Meeting-houſe at *Wolverhampton*. One of their Leaders who firſt got on Top of the Houſe cry'd out, GOD *damn King* GEORGE *and the Duke of* MARLBOROUGH! To which another, ſtanding on the Ground, reply'd, GOD *bleſs King* JAMES *the Third!* Theſe Words were the Signals agreed on for the Mob to begin the Attack. Several Meeting-houſes in *Staffordſhire* were actually pull'd down; and the Rioters had form'd a Deſign to demoliſh the Meeting-houſe at *Dudley*, *Bromwich*, and *Oldbury*, in one Day; they being not very remote from each other.

Sir *Henry Gough* iſſued out Warrants, and encouraged the People to ſet a Guard upon thoſe Meeting-houſes, to defend them, and to prevent their being pull'd down. Accordingly, on the Day fix'd, the Rabble appear'd, and march'd up to one of the Meeting-houſes with great Courage and Bravery; but, the Guard having Fire-Arms, they were ſoon repuls'd with Shame and Diſgrace. The ſame Night they were join'd by a conſiderable Reinforcement from *Birmingham*; and the next Morning came up again with double Fury, bellowing out *Sound for the Church! Sound for the Church!* And, being now provided with Fire-Arms alſo, they vehemently ſwore the Buſineſs of that Day ſhould be executed in ſpight of the Devil: Which was to pull down Three Meeting-houſes. Accordingly, they fired upon the Guard. One Gentleman had his Horſe ſhot under him; another was mortally wounded, and a great Number ſlightly wounded. They enter'd the Houſe; and demoliſh'd a great Part of it. However, at laſt, the Guard found Means to beat them all off; took ſeveral Priſoners, whom Sir *Henry Gough* ſent to *Stafford* Goal. Mr. *Bracebridge*, a Member of Parliament for *Tamworth*, in *Staffordſhire*, laid before the Houſe

Houſe of Commons a particular Account of this, and many other Outrages committed by this Rabble. And I beg the Reader to attend to the Reception it met with in that Honourable Houſe. As ſoon as the Accounts were confirm'd, they immediately came to a Reſolution to addreſs His Majeſty in the following Words, *viz.* 'That the Laws may be put in a ſpeedy 'and moſt vigorous Execution againſt the Rioters, and 'an Account be taken of all ſuch Juſtices as fail'd in 'the Diſcharge of their Duty; and that the Sufferers 'by theſe Riots may have a full Compenſation for 'their Damages; which they would enable His Ma'jeſty to make good out of the next Aids granted by 'Parliament.' The King heartily thank'd them for their Addreſs, and for their Zeal in endeavouring to ſecure the Publick Peace and Safety.

About this Time, on His late Majeſty's Birth-Day (*May* 28) a conſiderable Number of Gentlemen at *Oxford* illuminated their Windows, in the Evening, as a Token of their Zeal and Attachment to the Government. A wicked Crew of the ſame *old Stamp*, aſſembled in a riotous Manner, and demoliſhed every Window in the Town ſo illuminated: They would not ſuffer one ſingle Window to remain; but broke them all to Pieces. Dr. *Baron*, Vice-Chancellor, and Mr. *Richard Wiſe*, the Mayor, took no Notice of theſe Outrages. Alſo, at *Oxford*, on the Birth-Day of His preſent Majeſty, then Prince of *Wales*, Major *D'offranville* order'd a Bonfire, in the Evening, to be made before the *Star-Inn*. He drew up his Regiment, and diſmiſſed them again, after having fired three Rounds. But they were inſulted by the *Gownſmen* and *Mob*. The Major, his Officers, and many other Gentlemen, went to the *Star-Inn*, to drink the Loyal Healths uſual on thoſe Occaſions. But they had not been Ten Minutes before the Houſe was beſet with the Mob, and a Number of large Stones thrown into the Room. The Windows were inſtantly demoliſhed, and the Company obliged to fly for it: And had not the Soldiers immediately come to their Relief, it would in all Probability have ended in Bloodſhed and Murder.

There was a long Debate in the Houſe of Lords about this very Riot; and it was ordered that all Papers relating to it ſhould be laid before the Houſe. The *Gownſmen* were highly offended at being called by the general Name of *Rioters* and *Mob*, and pretended they were *Students*, which gave Occaſion to a good deal of Mirth; and great Enquiries were made about their particular *Studies*. It was remarked, they could not have *ſtudy'd* either the *Religion*, the *Laws*, or the *Government*, of their Country; for to all thoſe Matters they, by their *Conduct*, appeared to be *quite* and *entire Strangers*.

About the ſame Time, on the late King's Coronation-Day, at *Briſtol*, this ſame riotous Crew aſſembled in a moſt furious and tumultuous Manner, arm'd with Piſtols and Clubs, declaring Vengeance againſt all the *Meeting-Houſes*, and againſt all thoſe that ſhould ſhew their Loyalty in ſolemnizing the King's Coronation. At once, ſlam! down go all the Windows of Mr. *Whiteing* the Under-Sheriff. Another Party of them attacked Mr. *Steven*'s Houſe, which they enter'd and plunder'd, and murder'd one Mr. *Thomas*, who in a peaceable Manner deſired them to withdraw. They hurted and abuſed many other Gentlemen. If any one in the Streets cry'd, *God bleſs King* GEORGE! he was in Danger of his Life.

It would be endleſs for me to enumerate the Violence, Outrage, Wickedneſs, and Bloodſhed, that have from Time to Time been committed by this *Church Rabble* in moſt Parts of the Kingdom.

The Legiſlature now began to be alarm'd; and found it abſolutely neceſſary to enact ſome new and more ſevere Law, for the Preſervation of the Publick Peace and Safety. The Government ſaw, by numberleſs Inſtances, that the Rabble that attempted the Demolition of *Meeting-Houſes* were *in all Places the very ſame* that openly declared themſelves, by their Words and Actions, to be known and avowed Enemies to *His* MAJESTY'S *Perſon and Government*. And really, to ſpeak the Truth, one great Thing that render'd Meeting-Houſes and all Diſſenters ſo odious and abominable

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to the Rabble, was from their known hearty Attachment to the (then new) Family upon the Throne.

From theſe Conſiderations, it became the Reſolution of the Houſe of Commons, That, in this new Law which was to preſerve the Publick Peace, a Clauſe ſhould be inſerted for the better Security and Protection of Meeting-Houſes; and that not only the pulling down, or demoliſhing, a Meeting-Houſe ſhould be deem'd and adjudg'd to be *Felony*; but that the very *Beginning* to pull down, or the very *Beginning* to demoliſh, any Meeting-Houſe, ſhould be adjudged Felony without Benefit of the Clergy, and that the Offenders therein ſhall ſuffer Death, as in Caſes of Felony. *Vide* the Riot Act, *Anno primo* GEO.

This Clauſe I particularly recommend to the Conſideration of the *Exeter* Rioters. They did openly threaten, with Oaths and horrid Imprecations, that they would demoliſh the Meeting-Houſe, and by Force and Violence did pull Part of the Gallery down. Won't this be deem'd a *Beginning to demoliſh*, or a *Beginning to pull down*, and conſequently ſubject the Rioters to the Pains and Penalties of this Act? It is certainly for the Intereſt, as well as the Honour, and Reputation of the Citizens, to endeavour to ſuppreſs this wicked and violent Spirit of *Mobbing:* For had the Houſe been pull'd down, the City would undoubtedly have been obliged to rebuild it, and to have made the *Methodiſts* ample Satisfaction; as appears by the following Clauſe in the aforeſaid Act, *Anno primo* GEORGII:

'Be it enacted, by the Authority aforeſaid, that if 'any Building for Religious Worſhip, in any City or 'Town (that is either a County of itſelf, and is not 'within a Hundred) ſhall be demoliſhed, or pull'd 'down, wholly or in Part, — by any Perſons ſo un-'lawfully, riotouſly, and tumultuouſly aſſembled, — 'that then ſuch Damages ſhall and may be recovered, 'by Action, to be brought, in Manner aforeſaid, a-'gainſt Two or more Inhabitants of ſuch City or 'Town; and Judgment being given for the Plaintiff 'or Plaintiffs in ſuch Action, the Damages ſo to be 'recovered ſhall be raiſed and levied on the Inhabi-'tants of ſuch City, or Town, and paid to the Plain-

'tiff,

'tiff, or Plaintiffs, in ſuch Manner and Form, and by 'ſuch Ways and Means, as are provided by the ſaid 'Statute made in the 27th Year of the Reign of Queen 'Elizabeth, for reimburſing the Perſon or Perſons on 'whom any Money recovered againſt any Hundred, 'by any Party robbed, ſhall be levied.'

The Citizens already complain of the Weight and Load of the preſent Taxes. — Would they then be ſo mad as to have a new Tax levied on them, to rebuild the Methodiſts Meeting-Houſe? —— Such a Conduct would be a laſting Brand of Infamy and Diſgrace, not only on the Magiſtracy, but on the whole City.

Notwithſtanding the paſſing this new Law, now commonly known by the Name of the *Riot Act*, the *Church Rabble* ſtill continued their Violence and Outrage without Fear or Shame. On a certain Day Their Royal Highneſſes paſſing thro' *Fleet-ſtreet*, in their Return from *Greenwich*, a conſiderable Number of People happening to be at one Mr. *Read*'s, who kept a Publick-Houſe in that Street, they, as Their Royal Highneſſes had paſs'd along, diſtinguiſh'd themſelves by ſome particular Marks of Duty and Reſpect. The *Church Rabble* having had Intelligence of it, the very next Day a roaring ragged Rout came up to Mr. *Read*'s Houſe, and ſwore they would demoliſh it. *Read*, being a Man of Spirit appear'd with a loaded Muſket, threatning to ſhoot the firſt Man that ſhould enter his Houſe. Upon which they thought beſt to retire; but the next Day returned in a much greater Number, and at once demoliſh'd his Windows, and forced into the Houſe. *Read* diſcharged his Muſket, whereby one of the Ringleaders, *Vaughan*, was ſhot dead upon the Spot. The beſt Part of Mr. *Read*'s Houſhold Goods they carried clear off; the reſt they brought out into the Street, and broke to Pieces. It ought to be obſerved here, that *this Rabble* have ever been remarkable for being *Thieves* as well as *Rioters*. Some Gentlemen in Mr. *Read*'s Neighbourhood immediately apply'd to the Sheriff; who, without a Moment's Delay, repair'd to the Place, and cauſed the Proclamation to be read. The Privy Council was then ſitting; and, upon Notice of this Riot, immediately diſpatched a Party of Horſe-Guards

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to ſuppreſs the Riot, and with particular Orders to ſecure ſome of the Rioters. The Moment the Horſe-Guards appear'd they all began to ſcamper. The Guards purſued and took five of 'em. They were ſoon try'd; and, as Evidence was ſtrong againſt them, they were all found Guilty, receiv'd Sentence of Death, and were all executed, on a Gibbet erected on Purpoſe, at the End of *Saliſbury-Court*, near Mr. *Read*'s Houſe. The Rabble now ſeeing Five of their dear Brethren truſs'd up at once, in ſo publick and open a Manner, they were quite diſpirited. Their Hearts began to flag. They ſaw the Government was now in earneſt; and their Leaders, with all their Art and Cunning, could not rally them again. They were now forced to be content with breaking a few Windows, and that once now and then, in a pitiful ſneaking Manner, by Night.

Some of the Leaders of this Rabble commenced a Proſecution againſt Mr. *Read* for killing *Vaughan*, one of the Mob. Mr. *Johnſon*, a Juſtice of the Peace, and two Gentlemen more, of conſiderable Note, waited on the Lord Mayor, and gave Bail for Mr. *Read*. When his Trial came on, he was inſtantly acquitted with Honour; and a Preſent of five hundred Pounds was ſent him from the Treaſury, to repair the Damage he had ſuſtain'd by the Plunder and Theft of thoſe *God-damme Men*. Mr. *Gill* of *Cheapſide* had alſo a Preſent from the Treaſury of 200*l*. to make good the Damages he had ſuſtain'd from the ſame ragged Rout.

I could mention a Hundred Inſtances more of the Plunder, Theft, Robbery, Violence, and Outrage of this wicked Crew. But this is ſufficient to make good my former Aſſertion, That they are in the general the moſt Ignorant and Abandon'd, the moſt Impious, Profligate, and Prophane, that this or any other Nation hath ever produced; and that they are not only avow'd Enemies to our Publick Peace and Quiet, but alſo to our Laws, Conſtitution, and Government.

Thus have I given you the genuine juſt Character of the wicked Mob that have ſo perſecuted and abuſed the Methodiſts at *Exeter*. All Men, and all Parties, are beſt known by their general Conduct and Behaviour.

viour. The Methodiſts affirm, that all the Rudeneſs and Violence they have any where receiv'd came from the ſame Quarter *only*.

However, I can't omit taking Notice here, that tho' the Methodiſts affirm they have *never* met with any Abuſe or Outrage from the *Diſſenters* of any Denomination, yet they complain *much* againſt the PRESBYTERIAN CLERGY, who (they ſay) in their *Sermons* and *Converſations* frequently repreſent them in a *falſe* and *injurious Light*; and thereby leſſen the Affection, and raiſe the Antipathy, of their Common People towards them, who otherwiſe might be diſpoſed to look on them with *Tenderneſs* and *Moderation*, and to receive them in the Spirit of Meekneſs and Charity.

How far this Charge againſt the PRESBYTERIAN CLERGY may be *true* I can't pretend to ſay. I am very ſenſible ECCLESIASTICKS of *All Parties*, in their *Turns*, have never fail'd of being PERSECUTORS, when they have been in POSSESSION of POWER. And we can never be ſufficiently thankful to Almighty GOD, that, by the preſent *Laws* and *Conſtitutions* of this Kingdom, the Hands of ALL ECCLESIASTICKS are tied up from *perſecuting* each other.

The PRESBYTERIAN CLERGY formerly ſuffer'd much by the wicked Spirit of Archbiſhop *Laud*, and the other *perſecuting* PRELATES: And Multitudes tranſported themſelves to *New-England*, merely to enjoy that LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE which they were cruelly deny'd in their Native Country. But they were no ſooner ſettled in *New-England* than they began to think the RIGHT OF PERSECUTION was in THEMSELVES; and with unrelenting *Fury* and *Rage* they puniſh'd ALL who *preſum'd* to *differ* from *them* in *Doctrine* or *Diſcipline*. The QUAKERS felt the Weight of their *Power* with a Vengeance, and were treated with the utmoſt Rage and Violence. By the firſt Law made againſt the Quakers, every Maſter of a Ship was to be ſent to the Houſe of Correction who brought a Quaker into that Country. Soon after, by another Law, every Ship-Maſter that ſhould bring in a Quaker was to forfeit a Hundred Pounds, beſides being ſent to the Houſe of Correction. The Quakering Party

ty ſtill increaſing, our mild and merciful *Law-Makers* were under a Neceſſity of proceeding farther. And now every Perſon who ſhould entertain or conceal a Quaker, knowing him to be ſo, was to forfeit Forty Shillings for *every Hour*'s Entertainment or Concealment, and be committed to Priſon, 'till the Forfeiture ſhould be fully paid and ſatisfy'd.—There being nothing of the *ſanguinary Kind* in theſe *Laws*, they did not pleaſe the MINISTERS. *Therefore* they openly petitioned the Magiſtrates to make a Law for *baniſhing* the Quakers on Pain of *immediate Death*. Upon which, another *Law* was made, That whoever preſum'd to violate the former *Laws*, relating to *Quakers*, ſhould for the firſt Offence have one Ear cut off; for the ſecond have the other Ear cut off; and for the third Offence ſhould have his Tongue bored through with a hot Iron, and be confined in the Houſe of Correction 'till he be ſent away at his own Charge. Yet even this would not ſatisfy the MINISTERS. The Magiſtrates, by *their Inſtigation*, ſoon after made another *Law*, whereby the Quakers were all baniſh'd *on Pain of Death*. And, in Conſequence of this *Law*, Mr. *Wm. Robinſon*, an eminent Merchant, Mr. *Wm. Leddra*, Mr. *Marmaduke Stephens*, and a Gentlewoman, one Mrs. *Mary Dyer*, were all hang'd at *Boſton* for being *Quakers*. And they were going on *furiouſly* with more Executions, had they not been prevented by a *Mandamus* from *England*.

I can never read theſe Stories, without being fill'd with Indignation and Abhorrence at the Conduct and Practice of thoſe weak and wicked Men; who, tho' they had been ſeverely *perſecuted themſelves*, yet, in the very Place of their *Baniſhment*, *perſecuted others* with more and greater Severities: And all to ſupport and maintain what they were pleaſed to *call* the Opinions of the ORTHODOX and GODLY, and *their* CHURCH, DOCTRINE, and DISCIPLINE.

The Conduct of thoſe *Miniſters* brings to my Remembrance that wiſe and juſt Obſervation of the pious and learned Bp. *Burnet*: 'The Prieſts, *ſays he*, 'have a Secret to make the Natives of a Country 'miſerable, in ſpight of any Abundance with which 'Nature has furniſh'd them. They have not Souls

'big

'big enough, nor tender enough, for Government. 'They have both a Narrowneſs of Spirit and a 'Sourneſs of Mind, that do not agree with the 'Principles of Human Society; nor have they thoſe 'Compaſſions for the Miſerable, with which wiſe 'Governors ought to temper their Councils. For a 'ſtern Sourneſs of Temper, and an unrelenting Hard-'neſs of Heart, ſeems to belong to that Sort of 'Men.' Few Men had ever ſeen more of the World, or knew Mankind better than *Burnet*. This ſeems to be his calm and deliberate Sentiments.

I would not be underſtood here to reflect on the preſent Generation of *Preſbyterian Miniſters*, or to charge them with the perſecuting Principles and Practices of their Predeceſſors in *New-England*. If one may rely on the moſt Knowing and Conſiderable of their Laity, they give us a ſurpriſing Account of their Clergy at preſent; and pretend that the far greater Part of them are really in the Intereſt of LIBERTY; and have had the Honeſty and Courage to declare openly for the BIBLE and COMMON SENSE, and have now renounced all Power to add any *new Articles* to the *Chriſtian Faith*, or to impoſe their own Explication, or Conſequences, on the Conſciences of others; and that in their very *Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies* they have given up the unreaſonable Claim of impoſing *Subſcriptions* to *Human Creeds* and *Forms*, and have publickly aſſerted the Right of *private Judgment*.

Theſe are really New Teſtament Principles, perfectly conſiſtent with Natural and Revealed Religion. They are in themſelves generous and noble; admirably adapted to preſerve the Peace, and promote the Happineſs, of Human Society. And were they adhered to and inculcated by the Clergy of all Parties, Riot and Mobbing, Violence and Outrage, would ceaſe, and be no more. It is allowed on all hands, that throughout all the ſeveral Ages of the Chriſtian Church, the CLERGY have ever been the great Promoters of PERSECUTION, and have often ſet the World in a Flame, to ſatisfy their own unreaſonable Pride, Ambition, and Covetouſneſs. Yea, in the late dreadful Riot at *Exeter* a Reverend *Clergyman* was *preſent* to encourage and countenance

nance the wicked Mob; and what is more, one of the Prieſt-Vicars preſided as *Superintendant*, and in a furious Manner fell foul of Mr. CENNICK (the Methodiſt Miniſter) with Blows and opprobrious Language, as a Signal for the Rioters to begin the Attack.

How far different this from the admirable Precepts of the Bleſſed JESUS! who from his own Mouth has taught us, *Bleſſed are the Meek; for they ſhall inherit the Earth:* —— *Bleſſed are the Merciful; for they ſhall obtain Mercy:* ——It were to be wiſh'd, that the Clergy of our Eſtabliſh'd Church in a particular manner would read the New Teſtament with *Care* and *Attention*, and would enter more into the true Spirit and Genius of that *mild* and *merciful Religion*. This would procure them the Regard of all honeſt and wiſe Men.

I now come to examine the Reaſons and Pretences of the *Aiders* and *Abetters* of theſe Riots: For as to the *Rioters themſelves*, they, being All of the *Church-Rabble*, may be preſum'd to be ſo ignorant and ſavage, as hardly to be capable of Reaſoning or Reflection. They all may be reduced to the following: ——

Firſt, That the Methodiſts are Enemies to the CHURCH: That they deſtroy the Peace of the Church; and may in Time endanger its very Being and Exiſtence.

Secondly, That they preach nothing but *Hereſy* and *Nonſenſe*.

Theſe Reaſons I ſhall venture to examine in their Order; altho' I expect nothing for my Pains but to be treated with Scurrility and Scandal. However, I ſhall never think it a Shame to ſtand up in the Defence of our Religion, Laws, and Liberties, in Oppoſition to an *ignorant Crew*, who would demoliſh and overſet all. I am ſenſible the Minds of Men in general are ſo guided by Prepoſſeſſion, that the ſtrongeſt Arguments and cleareſt Reaſoning preſently loſe their Force and Weight; and, notwithſtanding the Deſign to reſcue Mankind from under the Bondage of *Bigottry* and *Superſtition* is certainly generous and noble, yet it will always meet with a ſtrong and warm Oppoſition; having the various Prejudices of Education and Intereſt to contend with.

I am now to prove that the Methodiſts are no En
mies to the CHURCH, or that the Church is not in an
poſſible Danger from theſe poor and peaceable Peopl
But I muſt here premiſe, that, being a LAYMAN, I u
derſtand this Word CHURCH in a LAY SENS
that is, in the NEW TESTAMENT SENSE of the Wor
denoting in general an *Aſſembly* of Chriſtians met tog
ther on a *Religious Account*, at a proper Time a
Place, to worſhip and ſerve GOD, agreeable to t
Dictates of their own Conſciences. This is the Ne
Teſtament CHURCH; about which I am never in a
Pain. Neither can I find that ever St. *Peter* or S
Paul, kept a Rout about the Danger of *their* CHURC
No; on the contrary, they declare it is built on t
Rock CHRIST JESUS, and that *the Gates* (or Power)
Hell ſhall never prevail againſt it. It will ſtand fi
and immutable. *Heaven and Earth may paſs awa
but the Word of the* LORD *abideth forever*. And a
Chriſtian, I rely on the Veracity of GOD, that he w
ever defend this Church, and that Revelation of
Mind and Will, that he has graciouſly vouchſafed u

This Church claims no Power or Dominion over t
Perſons, Property, or Conſciences of others. It is
its own Nature *mild*, *merciful*, *tender-hearted*, and
fectionate; forbids all Kind of *Violence* and *Outra*
and allows of no other Weapons but thoſe of *Argum*
and *Perſuaſion*. With regard to Human Society, i
friendly and *peaceable* to the laſt Degree, and gives
Men an *equal Right* of *differing* from each other,
enjoins that each Man ſhould remain in the quiet a
peaceable Poſſeſſion of his Principles.

This is the New Teſtament Church. And ſurely
Man will dare ſay that the Methodiſts are Enemies
this Church, or that *this* Church is in any manner
Danger from thoſe poor People.

I am very ſenſible, when the CLERGY make a N
about *their* Church being in Danger, they mean a
ferent Kind of Church from what I have been
deſcribing. They mean a *Trading Church*, a Chu
of *Power*, *Dominion*, *Wealth*, and *Grandeur*, *Tra*
tions; *Pluralities*, *Non-Reſidences*, &c. &c. &c.

But let us take the Church in their *own Senſe*; and even then I'll undertake to prove it is in no Danger from the Methodiſts. This Church, with all its Revenues, Is it not guarded, and fenced about, by certain fix'd and preſcribed Laws? Are not all the Nobility and Gentry of this Church? And all thoſe of any conſiderable Birth, Quality, or Fortune? Yea, every Family in this Kingdom has an Intereſt in the Support of this Church, as ſome one or other of the Family may in Time ſhare in its Wealth and Preferments. Is it not then ridiculous to preſume, that the poor deſpiſed Methodiſts can ſhake or endanger an Eſtabliſhment, which ſo many various Intereſts muſt always combine and concur to ſupport? The legal Church Conſtitution can never be in any Danger from Diſſenters of any Kind, as long as they ſuffer them to remain in the quiet Poſſeſſion of that *Indulgence* and *Toleration* which the Laws allow. So that the Cry of the Church's being in Danger from the Methodiſts is a weak and knaviſh Cry.

I now come to obſerve how far the *Peace* of the Church is deſtroy'd by the Methodiſts. By the *Peace* of the Church I mean no more than this; That any Number of Chriſtians ought *quietly* to enjoy the ſacred Privilege of meeting together, to worſhip GOD, when, and as often as, they may think proper; and whoever ſhall preſume to diſturb or moleſt them, let his Title or Pretenſions be what it will, is a *Breaker of the Peace* of the Church. Therefore to pretend, or to charge the Methodiſts with deſtroying the Peace of the Church is an Inſult, and an open Affront, on the Underſtandings of Mankind. No, certainly: It is the wicked Rioters, their Aiders and Abetters, and They only, that deſtroy the Peace of the Church. It is they that are the publick Incendiaries, and not the Methodiſts.

A Man who leaves the Communion of any particular Church does not break the Peace of that Church. But he breaks the Peace of the Church who would, by Force and Violence, keep any one in the Communion of any particular Church.

The real Meaning of the *Peace of the Church*, in the *Eccleſiaſtical* Senſe of the Word, in all Ages has been the *Power of the Prieſt*. By the *Church* they mean

Themſelves. And by the *Worſhip of* GOD they mean the Worſhip and Regard to be paid their *Perſons*, and a blind ſlaviſh Submiſſion to their own *Dictates*, *Dreams*, and *Fancies*; which they would have the World implicitly receive as *Religion*, and the *Worſhip of* GOD.

Sir WM. TEMPLE, in his Account of the Religion of the *United Provinces*, ſays: 'There all the Right and 'Juriſdiction of the Clergy, or Hierarchy, are ſup-'preſs'd. There is no Eccleſiaſtical Authority left to 'riſe up and trouble, or to fetter the Civil Power. 'All the Goods and Poſſeſſions of the Church are whol-'ly in the Hands of the State; which makes a great 'Increaſe of the Publick Revenue: — A Thing the 'moſt neceſſary for the Support of the Government. 'The Order of the *Clergy* make no Part of the States 'in *Holland:* Nor have they any *Vote* in their Aſſem-'blies. And it is hardly to be imagin'd how all the 'Violence and Bitterneſs, which accompany Religion 'in other Countries, ſeem to be appeas'd and ſoften'd 'here, by the *general Freedom* which *all Men* enjoy. 'No Man here complains of Preſſure in his Conſcience, 'or of being forced to any publick *Profeſſion* of his '*Faith*, or of being reſtrained from his own *Manner* 'of Worſhip in his *Houſe*, or obliged to any other a-'broad. And whoever aſks more in Point of Religion, 'without the *indiſputed Evidence* of a particular *Miſſion* 'from Heaven, may juſtly be ſuſpected not to aſk for 'GOD's Sake, but for his own.'

Thus what I have advanced on this Head is ſupported by no leſs Authority than that of Sir *William Temple*.

I now come to the ſecond Charge againſt the Methodiſts, *viz.* That they are Fools and Madmen, and preach nothing but Hereſy and Nonſenſe. When the Methodiſts came firſt into this Country, it's true, they preach'd in the open Fields. But now, as their Numbers are ſo increas'd, they have formed themſelves into a regular Society. They have a Meeting Houſe of their own, and their ſtated Times of Publick Worſhip. They are a ſober, quiet, inoffenſive and peaceable People. They believe the Scripture. They pray to GOD heartily. They pray for King GEORGE and the ROYAL FAMILY conſtantly and vehemently. They

pay the Taxes chearfully. I now call upon all the Aiders and Abetters of the late Riot to offer any one Reaſon why theſe poor Methodiſts (who are undoubtedly as good Subjects to the King and Government as any in the Kingdom) ſhould not be intitled to the *Security* and Protection of the *Laws*, as well as any other People, and alſo to the ſame *Indulgence* and *Toleration*, now legally held by the Diſſenters of all Denominations. Not the leaſt Shadow of Reaſon can be offer'd to the contrary.

As to the Charge of *Hereſy* and *Nonſenſe*:—Give me Leave to ſay, as to *Hereſy*, it's a fooliſh and nonſenſical Word; and has been always made to ſignify any Opinion contrary to that of angry fiery Bigots. Thus all Parties are Heretieks to each other. In *Turkey* a *Chriſtian* is a Heretick; in *England* a *Turk* is a Heretick. At *Rome* a *Proteſtant* is a Heretick; in *England* a *Roman Catholick* is a Heretick: And with an ignorant, hot, fiery *Churchman*, a *Methodiſt* or a *Preſbyterian* is a Heretick. Therefore, among all honeſt and wiſe Men, *Hereſy* is a fooliſh and nonſenſical Word.

CHRISTIANITY declares GOD *is no Reſpecter of Perſons*, or Parties. His tender *Mercies are over all his Works*. He has no favourite Opinions, Sects, or Nations. Acts x. 34, 35. *And* Peter *opened his Mouth, and ſaid, Of a Truth, I perceive,* GOD *is no Reſpecter of Perſons; but in every Nation he that feareth him, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted of him.* Rom. ii. 11. *There is no Reſpect of Perſons with* GOD. Coloſ. iii. 11. *There is neither Greek nor Jew, Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond or Free.* Circumciſion is nothing; Uncircumciſion is nothing; but keeping the Commandments of CHRIST. Thus we plainly ſee RELIGION does not conſiſt in *Parties*, in *Forms*, or Ceremonies; but only in living in the Fear of GOD, and keeping his Commandments.

I have often thought that the little Differences and Animoſities amongſt the Chriſtian *Laity* on Account of *Religion*, would ſoon vaniſh and diſappear, and that they would all cement in the Bond of Love and Friendſhip, were it not for the Cunning and Craft of the *Eccleſiaſticks*; whoſe Intereſt it manifeſtly is to keep up thoſe

Distinctions, and all the little Resentments between Party and Party, that they may manage them the more easily, and keep them more under the Power of Ignorance and Superstition; while *They* pursue their main Business; which apparently is to possess great Revenues, to live in Pomp and Grandeur, assuming and exercising Dominion over their Brethren. Which Power has been always imploy'd to the very great Hurt and Damage of the Christian *Laity*, and in a Manner highly injurious to the Gospel of CHRIST. And though this has been most notoriously the Case in *Popish Countries*, yet, notwithstanding the *Reformation*, there has been too much Cause to complain of it among *Protestants*.

As to the Methodists preaching *Nonsense*: ——Whether *that* be true or not I can't pretend to determine, having never so much as once been at their Meeting-House, nor having ever had any the least Acquaintance, or Conversation, with any of their Ministers. But let us even admit it to be true; it will by no means justify the Rage, Fury, and Violence, of the Rioters. Among us Protestants, no Party presumes to be *infallible*. The Church of *England* renounces all Pretensions to *Infallibility*. All Men, and all Parties, are constantly liable to Error and Mistake; and what one Man, or one Party, deems to be perfectly just and reasonable, another deems to be downright Nonsense.

The *Mahomedan* sees perfectly the Reasonableness and Justice of all the different Modes and Ceremonies of Worship that are *Establish'd* in *Turkey*. I, who am a *Christian*, and a *Protestant*, at the first View, condemn them all to be impious and profane. The *Roman Catholick* has a high Esteem for his Crossings, Bowings, Cringings, his Relicts, his Beads, and Holy-Water, together with a Variety of antick Tricks, Gestures, and Vestments, which his Priest injoins him, and which he observes and performs with a strict and nice Scrupulosity; and highly applauds the Wisdom of the Church in appointing such holy and pious Ceremonies. The *Protestant* deems them all to be useless, foolish, and ridiculous; and roundly declares they are calculated for no other Purpose than to keep the poor *Laity* in a servile Fear and Dependence on the Rev. *Clergy*.

Yea,

Yea, in the ſame Church, or Party, what one has in the higheſt Eſteem, another of the ſame Community ſhall treat with Contempt and Ridicule. Thus, in our own *Eſtabliſh'd Church*, what Multitudes are there that have the *Athanaſian Creed*, in the utmoſt Veneration! Whilſt others, of the *ſame Church* and Community affirm, they can't believe one Word o it, without offering Violence to their Reaſon and Underſtanding, and that the *damnatory Clauſes* are ſhocking and offenſive. The *Church* declares that this Creed contains the Catholick Faith, and which except a Man believe faithfully, he can't be ſaved. Notwithſtanding which, a noted Writer of this ſame *Church* has publickly told the World, that the Propoſitions contain'd in this Creed are unintelligible, and contradictory to each other; and that they have not ſo much to do with the Salvation of Mankind as the Fables of *Æſop*. For, ſays he, thoſe Fables, when attended to, will afford ſuch Inſtructions as will make Mankind wiſer and better: Whereas the Propoſitions contained in this Creed ſerve only to perplex and confound Mens Minds, and to furniſh out Materials for Scepticks and Unbelievers, therewith to oppoſe the Chriſtian Religion.

Yea, the very *Preſbyterians* are not qu'te free from this Charge. Some of *their Laity* have been forced to confeſs, *that Nonſenſe*, or *unintelligible Things* have at Times been advanced in their Societies.

Thus, you ſee, all Parties ſtand charged by each other, or ſome of their own Society, with a Spice of this *Nonſenſe*. But it will by no means follow, that for this Reaſon one Party muſt knock out another's Brains. Therefore, even admitting the Methodiſts do preach *Nonſenſe*, it would not amount to a Juſtification of the Rioters, nor can it be offered as any Reaſon why they ſhould not receive the Puniſhment the Law aſſigns for ſuch notorious Offenders, and Diſturbers of the Publick Peace.

I have now done with the RIOT, and the RIOTERS; and ſhall greatly rejoice if I have been ſo happy as to convince them of their Folly and Wickedneſs: And I would moſt earneſtly recommend to them, their

their Aiders, and Abetters, that, as they call themſelves *Chriſtians*, they would enter more into the true Spirit and Genius of that *mild* and *peaceable* Religion. And they would preſently ſee that it teaches nothing but Peace and Love, Compaſſion and Tenderneſs, to all in Diſtreſs; Forbearance and Forgiveneſs of Injuries, Humanity, and a generous Indulgence to all who may happen to differ from us. It likewiſe enjoins and requires Submiſſion and Obedience to the Laws of our Country, Charitableneſs, and an univerſal Benevolence to all Mankind. THIS is *Chriſtianity*; THIS is the *Religion* of honeſt and wiſe Men; and THIS is the *Religion* that has GOD for its Author.

But if you continue to breathe forth nothing but Revenge, implacable Hatred, and Fury; to raiſe Mobs; to commit Violence and Outrage; to oppreſs and abuſe your honeſt inoffenſive Neighbours for trifling Opinions, and will dare to overturn every Thing, Sacred or Civil, that may ſtand in your Way; —— then, — whatever your Pretenſions are, you can belong to *no Church* but the *Devil's Church*. Such a Religion as yours muſt have the *Devil* for its Author. It can never come from GOD.

Probably, by this Time, the Reader may be very ſolicitous to know the Author of this Performance, and particulary to what *Party* or *Religion* he adheres. This can be of no manner of Conſequence to the Publick. However, for the Satisfaction of the Reader, the Author aſſures him, that he is no METHODIST. That in his *Opinion* and *Judgment* he is as remote from being a *Methodiſt*, as he himſelf can poſſibly be. None of his particular Friends, Relations, or Acquaintance, are of this Denomination. And that he is under no manner of Obligations or Engagements to the Methodiſts beyond the common Ties of *Human Nature*. And that it would never have entered into his Head to have taken up his Pen in their Defence, had they not been daily, and openly, treated in this City with ſuch Rudeneſs, Violence, and Abuſe, as would have made even *Indians* or Pagans, to have bluſh'd. Their Treatment has been contrary to all the Laws of common Humanity; directly

directly oppoſite to all the Principles of Natural and Reveal'd Religion; contrary to all the known and eſtabliſh'd Laws of this Realm; as well as inconſiſtent with thoſe Rules of common Juſtice, and common Honeſty, to which all Men and all Parties have a Juſt and equitable Claim.

The Author, further, begs Leave to obſerve, that theſe Reflections were wrote for his *own private Amuſement*, and without any Deſign to publiſh them: And that the *Publication* is in Conſequence of a Reſolution form'd in a certain Evening when his Reſentment and Indignation againſt the Rioters were at no ſmall Height. He ſaw with his own Eyes the horrid gloomy Spectacle. He ſaw the wicked Rioters collected and aſſembled together by Beat of Drum in the open Streets, with Sticks and Bats, in order to diſturb and abuſe the poor Methodiſts, who were at their Meeting-Houſe worſhipping and ſerving GOD, according to the Dictates of their own Conſciences, in a Manner perfectly innocent and inoffenſive, and without the leaſt Diſturbance to the Publick Peace and Quiet. He ſaw the poor Methodiſts flee with great Fear and Trembling, and the wicked Rabble perſecuting with Rage and Violence. His Heart was fill'd with Pity and Tenderneſs for their Security and Protection. And what added greatly to his Concern and Solicitude was from a certain Information, that the Night before this very fameriotous Crew, to the Number of many Hundreds, furiouſly attacked Mr. *Adams*, one of their Miniſters, with Sticks, Dirt, and Mud; and in all Probability would have murder'd him in the open Street, before he could have reach'd his Lodging, had not a *good Samaritan* in *Southgate-ſtreet* taken him into his Houſe, and there reſcu'd him from their violent and wicked Hands.

This diſmal and gloomy Sight, and the Recital of the more diſmal Story, affected me beyond Expreſſion. The *Smithfield* Bonfire, the Act *De Heretico comburendo*, with all the Terrors and Horrors of *Perſecution*, for ſome Time haunted my Imagination: —— 'Till at laſt I began to reflect, that I was in that happy and bleſſed Iſle of *GREAT BRITAIN*, in the Reign of *George* II. a Period of Time wherein ſacred *Freedom*, *Liberty*, and

Laws

Laws prevail'd; and by which *Laws* the Rage and Violence of our Rioters would ſoon be reſtrain'd.

This is the naked Truth; and ſhall be my only Apology for this *Publication*, which at this Moment was reſolv'd and determin'd on.

To conclude All. — Should the natural Curioſity of the Reader incline him to deſire a more particular Deſcription of the Author; —He aſſures him, with the utmoſt Truth and Juſtice, that he is not conſcious to himſelf of any violent Attachment to any one Party whatever: That he has much at Heart the Intereſt of his Country, and the Preſervation of the Publick Peace and Tranquility: That he adheres to no *Principles* repugnant to *Truth*, *Reaſon*, and *Scripture:* And as to *Politicks* he has the *Laws* of the Land, the Conſtitution, and the Hiſtory of *England*, for his Guide. In Matters of *Religion*, he deſires to be govern'd by the *Bible* and *Common-Senſe*. And whoever walks by theſe Rules walks ſecurely.

F I N I S.